

MINUTES
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday, March 14, 2023

TIME: 8:00 A.M.

PLACE: Room EW41

MEMBERS: Chairman Yamamoto, Vice Chairman McCann, Representatives Boyle, Clow, Mendive, Ehardt, Wisniewski, Garner, Hawkins, Hill, Lanting, Nelsen, Price, Sauter, Berch, Galaviz, Mathias

**ABSENT/
EXCUSED:** Rep. Boyle

GUESTS: The sign-in sheet will be retained in the committee secretary's office; following the end of session the sign-in sheet will be filed with the minutes in the Legislative Library.

Chair Yamamoto called the meeting to order at 8:01 am.

MOTION: **Rep. Sauter** made a motion to approve the minutes of February 27, and March 2, 2023. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

H 289: **Rep. Clow** presented **H 289**, proposed legislation which would amend existing law to establish the Idaho Education Opportunity Program. He said this program would allow funds to follow the student. He spoke about a portal system and said funds would only be released for approved purchases. He spoke about the empowering parents grant and accountability requirements for private schools and students.

Kathy Dawes, League of Women Voters, **Mary Ruckh**, and **Mary McAleese** testified in **opposition** to **H 289**. They spoke about taking money away from public schools, an already under funded program, to give to private schools. They said public schools need to be taken care of first.

Chris Cargill spoke in **support** of **H 289** and said education choice improves outcomes. He said this bill would allow funds to go to anything that helps students, including special needs students.

Nancy Gregory, Idaho School Board Association, and **Andy Grover**, Idaho Association of School Administrators, and **Paul Stark** testified in **opposition** to **H 289**. They said before more programs are added, there should be more work on a way to free up money to spend on the many other issues at hand.

Committee members spoke about School Vouchers and Education Savings Accounts. They spoke about student testing, accountability and the possibility of private schools raising tuition.

MOTION: **Rep. Mendive** made a motion to send **H 289** to the floor with a **DO PASS** recommendation.

**SUBSTITUTE
MOTION:** **Rep. Garner** made a substitute motion to **HOLD H 289** in committee.

**ROLL CALL
VOTE:** Roll call vote was requested. **Substitute motion carried by a vote of 9 AYE, 7 NAY, and 1 Absent/Excused. Voting in favor** of the substitute motion: **Reps. McCann, Garner, Lanting, Nelsen, Sauter, Berch, Galaviz, Mathia, and Yamamoto. Voting in opposition** to the substitute motion: **Reps. Clow, Mendive, Ehardt, Wisniewski, Hawkins, Hill, and Price. Rep. Boyle was absent/excused.**

RS 30629C1: **Rep. McCann** presented **RS 30629C1**, proposed legislation which would allow Idaho voters the opportunity to indicate their support or opposition to divert public tax dollars to private K-12 schools. She said a pamphlet would be sent to voters prior to the 2024 General Election. She said this bill would help determine the best pathway forward.

MOTION: **Rep. Garner** made a motion to introduce **RS 30629C1**.
Committee members spoke about the language used in the proposed question. They said the wording matters and this would be a new appropriation of funds not a diversion of funds. They said they recommend changing "divert" to "appropriation."
Other committee members said this would give voters the chance to share opinions instead of just the legislative voice. They said state agencies do not appropriate funds so the wording of the question is accurate.

SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Wisniewski** made a substitute motion to introduce **RS 30629C1** with the following changes: replace the word "divert" with "appropriation."

AMENDED SUBSTITUTE MOTION: **Rep. Berch** made an amended substitute motion to return **RS 30629C1** to the sponsor. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

RS 30636: **Rep. McCann** presented **RS 30636**, proposed legislation which would protect the assets of a community college should the community college cease to operate or lose its accreditation. She said the State Board of Examiners would set up a trust to keep these assets safe. She said this legislation replaces a portion of **H 226**.

MOTION: **Rep. Berch** made a motion to introduce **RS 30637**.

MOTION WITHDRAWN: **Rep. Berch** asked unanimous consent to withdraw his motion to introduce **RS 30637**. There being no objection the request was granted.

MOTION: **Rep. Berch** made a motion to introduce **RS 30636**. **Motion carried by voice vote.**

ADJOURN: There being no further business to come before the committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:49 am.

Representative Yamamoto
Chair

Amy Bengtzen
Secretary